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ABSTRACT

The educational and employment opportunities available to noncollege-bound youths in Germany and the United States were compared. The analysis focused on the following: the future of youth and work, the transition from school to career, apprenticeship, academic education, and vocational education. The existing U.S. apprenticeship system, in which only 5 percent of all high school graduates enroll immediately after graduation and in which three-fourths of all apprentices are prepared for employment in only about 30 primarily blue-collar occupations, was found to contrast sharply with the German apprenticeship system, which serves 28 times more youths than the current U.S. system and which prepares both females and males for a wide range of white-collar and blue-collar occupations. It was concluded that the German apprenticeship system must not simply be transplanted intact to the United States but must instead be made more flexible and reflective of U.S. values and traditions. It was recommended that a U.S. apprenticeship system be developed that would accomplish the following: exploit workplaces and other community settings as learning environments, link work experience to academic learning, give youth dual roles workers and learners, and foster close relationships between youths and adult mentors. Contains 291 endnotes. (MN)

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